1: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1938 RB1 Baltic States RBI

A. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

162 Until the twelfth century the marshes and forest-lands along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea were left in the more or less undisturbed possession of a number of pagan tribes. The Esths and Livs[1] in the northern regions belonged to the Finnish branch of the Ural-Altaic family, while another group farther to the south, subdivided into Letts, Borussians, and Lithuanians, besides a number of other branches, was of Indo-European stock. The Borussians, who moved southward to what is now East Prussia, were early subdued and assimilated by the Germans, while the Letts tended to push northward into Livonia.

797 167 *The Teutonic Orders.* The first invaders of these regions were the Danes, who conquered the northern half of Estonia in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. German merchants and missionaries had meanwhile penetrated into Livonia, where a bishopric was established at Riga in 1201. From then onwards the greater part of the areas now occupied by the States of Latvia and Estonia gradually fell under the dominion first of the Knights of the Sword, and then of the Order of Teutonic Knights, to whom, in 1346, the Danes sold their share of Estonia. These Orders colonized the territory, converted the inhabitants to Christianity, and made them their serfs. Their lineal descendants, the Baltic Barons, maintained their position as the land-owning class until recent times, in spite of the fact that the territory eventually passed into the hands of Sweden and Poland, and finally into those of Russia.

In Lithuania, on the other hand, the Teutonic Knights were never able to make much headway except in the Memel territory, of which the frontier was permanently fixed after the defeat of the Order at Tannenberg in 1410 by Vytautas—one of a succession of Lithuanian Grand Dukes who, in the course of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, built up a united and powerful State and helped to check the Tartar invasion of Europe.

648 *Poland and Sweden (1386–1709).* After the death of Vytautas in 1430, Lithuania rapidly fell into a position of dependence on Poland, with which country she had already been nominally connected under

197 162 [1] According to Prince P. A. Kropotkin the native language of the Livs was of Finnish origin, though they now speak a Lettish *patois*. (*See Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, vol. xvi, p. 817.) The Livs are now practically extinct, though there is a small community of them, some 1,500 strong, in modern Latvia.